

What is claimed is:

1. A method of sending a message sent over a network by a backbone carrier,
comprising:

connecting a backbone structure of the backbone carrier to a first internet service
5 provider that has at least a first client;

connecting the backbone structure to a second internet service provider that has at
least a second client;

receiving a message for the second client from the first client, the message being
received through the first internet service provider;

10 charging the first internet service provider a receiving amount in accordance with
characteristics of the message; and

brokering a connection to the second internet service provider which receives the
message from the first client, wherein brokering the connection includes retaining a part of the
receiving amount by the backbone carrier and paying another part of the receiving amount to the
5 second internet service provider.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein the part paid to the second internet service provider
varies, depending on whether the second internet service provider met predetermined
performance criteria.

3. The method of claim 1, wherein the receiving amount charged to the first internet
service provider varies, depending on whether the second internet service provider met
predetermined performance criteria.

25 4. The method of claim 1, wherein the receiving amount charged to the first internet
service provider varies, depending on whether the backbone carrier met predetermined
performance criteria.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein the amount retained by the backbone carrier varies,
30 depending on whether the backbone carrier met predetermined performance criteria.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the fee charged to the first internet service provider is equal to the sum of the part of the receiving amount retained by the backbone carrier and the part of the receiving amount paid to the second internet service provider.

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7. A method of pricing message transmission in a network, comprising:
receiving, by a backbone in the network, a message for a second client from a first client, the message being received by the backbone structure through a message originator;
charging the message originator a receiving amount; and
10 brokering a connection to a message terminator to terminate the message sent by the first client, wherein brokering the connection includes retaining a part of the receiving amount and paying another part of the receiving amount to the message terminator.

8. The method of claim 7, wherein the part paid to the message terminator varies, depending on whether the message terminator met predetermined performance criteria.

9. The method of claim 7, wherein the receiving amount charged to the message originator varies, depending on whether the message originator met predetermined performance criteria.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein the receiving amount charged to the message originator varies, depending on whether the backbone met predetermined performance criteria.

11. The method of claim 7, wherein the amount retained for brokering the connection varies, depending on whether the backbone met predetermined performance criteria.

12. The method of claim 7, wherein the fee charged to the message originator is equal to the sum of the part of the receiving amount retained by the backbone and the part of the receiving amount paid to the message terminator.

13. The method of claim 7, further including:

receiving, by the backbone in the network, a message for the first client from the second client, the message being received by the backbone structure through the message originator;

charging the originator of the message from the second client a receiving amount;

5 and

brokering a connection to the a terminator of the message from the second client, wherein brokering the connection includes retaining a part of the receiving amount and paying another part of the receiving amount to the terminator of the message from the second client.

10 14. The method of claim 7, wherein the amount paid to the message terminator is determined in accordance with performance criteria defined in a Service Level Agreement between a backbone carrier and the message terminator.

15 15. The method of claim 7, wherein the amount charged the message originator is determined in accordance with performance criteria defined in a Service Level Agreement between a backbone carrier and the message originator.

20 16. The method of claim 7, wherein performance criteria for the message terminator and for the backbone are defined in a Service Level Agreement.

25 17. The method of claim 7, wherein the message originator is charged the receiving amount only if the message is delivered within predefined delivery parameters.

18. The method of claim 7, wherein performance criteria include performance criteria for network availability.

19. The method of claim 7, wherein performance criteria include performance criteria for acceptable amount of packet loss.

30 20. The method of claim 7, wherein performance criteria include performance criteria for delivery delay.

21. The method of claim 7, wherein performance criteria include performance criteria for network throughput.

22. The method of claim 7, wherein performance criteria define a sliding scale of acceptable performance and the amount paid to the message terminator varies in accordance with the sliding scale.

23. The method of claim 7, wherein performance criteria are defined in an SLA that specifies end-to-end performance between the message originator and the message terminator.

24. The method of claim 7, wherein the amount charged to the message originator depends on the class of service for which the message originator has signed up.

25. The method of claim 7, wherein the amount charged to the message terminator depends on a class of service assigned to the message.

26. The method of claim 7, wherein the amount retained for brokering depends on a class of service assigned to the message.

27. The method of claim 7, wherein a flat fee is charged to the message originator for each message received from the message originator.

28. The method of claim 7, wherein the message originator is an ISP.

29. The method of claim 7, wherein the message originator is a private network.

30. The method of claim 7, wherein the message originator is an individual.

31. The method of claim 7, wherein the backbone must meet predetermined performance criteria to collect its brokerage fee.

32. The method of claim 7, wherein performance criteria include a combination of requirements for individual customers, the backbone, and for end-to end system performance.

5 33. The method of claim 7, wherein the amounts paid to the message terminator and charged to the message originator are different for different classes of service for which customers have contracted with the backbone.

10 34. The method of claim 7, wherein the backbone charges a flat fee to the message originator without regard to the amount of data originated.

 35. The method of claim 7, wherein the backbone pays a flat fee to the message terminator without regard to the amount of data terminated.

15 36. A method of pricing message transmission in a network, comprising:
 charging a receiving amount to an internet service provider that both originates and receives messages, when the internet service provider originates a message; and
 brokering a connection to another internet service provider that is the destination of the message, wherein brokering the connection includes taking a part of the receiving amount
20 and paying another part of the receiving amount to the other internet service provider that is the destination of the message.

 37. A method of pricing message transmission in a network, comprising:
 charging a message originator a receiving amount; and
25 brokering a connection to a message terminator to receive the message, wherein brokering the connection includes retaining a part of the receiving amount and paying another part of the receiving amount to the message terminator.

30 38. An apparatus that sends a message over a backbone carrier, comprising:
 a software portion configured to connect a backbone structure of the backbone carrier to a first internet service provider that has at least a first client;

a software portion configured to connect the backbone structure to a second internet service provider that has at least a second client;

a software portion configured to receive a message for the second client from the first client, the message being received through the first internet service provider;

5 a software portion configured to charge the first internet service provider a receiving amount in accordance with characteristics of the message; and

a software portion configured to broker a connection to the second internet service provider which receives the message from the first client, wherein brokering the connection includes retaining a part of the receiving amount by the backbone carrier and paying another part
10 of the receiving amount to the second internet service provider.

39. The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the part paid to the second internet service provider varies, depending on whether the second internet service provider met predetermined performance criteria.

40. The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the receiving amount charged to the first internet service provider varies, depending on whether the second internet service provider met predetermined performance criteria.

41. The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the receiving amount charged to the first internet service provider varies, depending on whether the backbone carrier met predetermined performance criteria.

42. The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the amount retained by the backbone carrier
25 varies, depending on whether the backbone carrier met predetermined performance criteria.

43. The apparatus of claim 38, wherein the fee charged to the first internet service provider is equal to the sum of the part of the receiving amount retained by the backbone carrier
30 and the part of the receiving amount paid to the second internet service provider.

44. An apparatus that prices message transmission in a network, comprising:

a software portion configured to receive, by a backbone in the network, a message for a second client from a first client, the message being received by the backbone structure through a message originator;

a software portion configured to charge the message originator a receiving amount; and

a software portion configured to broker a connection to a message terminator to terminate the message sent by the first client, wherein brokering the connection includes retaining a part of the receiving amount and paying another part of the receiving amount to the message terminator.

45. An apparatus that prices message transmission in a network, comprising:

a software portion configured to charge a receiving amount to an internet service provider that both originates and receives messages, when the internet service provider originates a message; and

a software portion configured to broker a connection to another internet service provider that is the destination of the message, wherein brokering the connection includes taking a part of the receiving amount and paying another part of the receiving amount to the other internet service provider that is the destination of the message.

46. An apparatus that prices message transmission in a network, comprising:

a software portion configured to charge a message originator a receiving amount; and

a software portion configured to broker a connection to a message terminator to receive the message, wherein brokering the connection includes retaining a part of the receiving amount and paying another part of the receiving amount to the message terminator.

47. A computer program product, comprising:

instructions executable by a data processing system, including:

